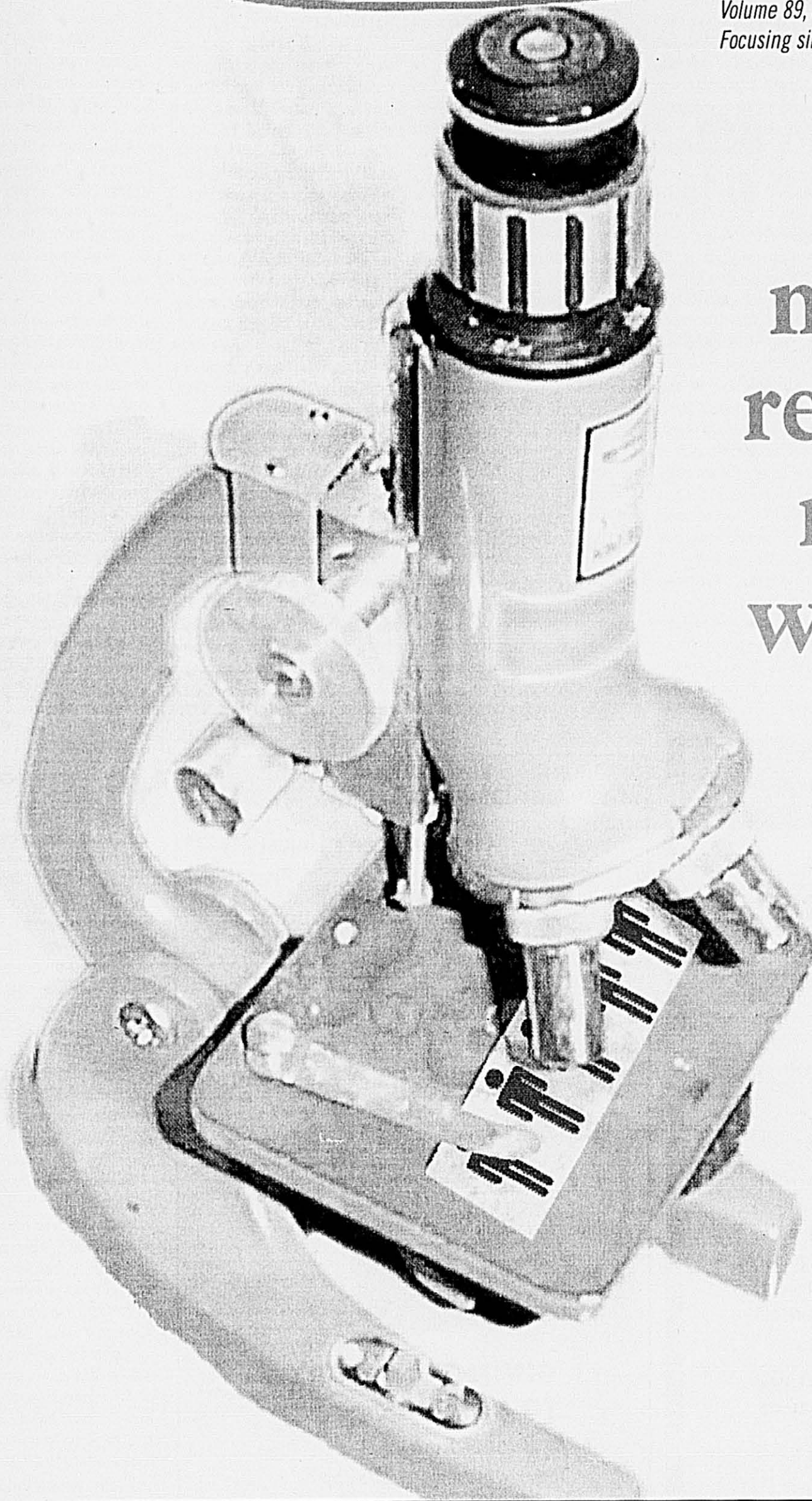


THE MCGILL DAILY

Volume 89, Issue 30 November 18, 1999
Focusing since 1911

Does medical research neglect women?

story on pg. 6



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Racist sticker campaign targets
campus – pg. 2

CULTURE –

Busting ads and jamming culture with
Kalle Lasn – pg. 8

Racist Sticker Campaign Targets Campus

Security says hands are tied

BY JON BRICKER

Action has to be taken to stop a racist sticker campaign that has vandalized a number of campus facilities, say angered campus leaders.

Stickers suggesting that blacks and bisexuals are far more likely than white heterosexuals to have AIDS and calling the white race an endangered species have been turning up around campus in the last few weeks.

The stickers were issued by National Alliance, a white supremacist organization based in West Virginia that accepts in its mandate "our responsibilities as Aryan men and women to strive for the advancement of our race," and the need to recognize "the inequalities which arise as natural consequences of the evolutionary process and which are essential to progress."

Upon learning of the stickers' presence on campus, student leaders expressed their concern.

"It's serious because the people doing this are probably university students like us, and they're supposed to be educated people," said Uche Chuta, a coordinator for the campus Anti-Racist Action chapter and a member of the Black Students' Network.

"The BSN will definitely respond, but it needs a campus-wide response," added BSN coordinator Ayesha Wharton. "These stickers need to come down immediately," she said. But while McGill's security was aware of the incidents, Director of Security

Services Steve Paquin doubts that much will be done. "McGill does not condone these things, but the fact is we can't really do anything," he said, adding that security lacks the resources to track down perpetrators of vandalism. He also said that even if someone was caught, security would not be in a position to press charges.

"It's very difficult to police this sort of things. No one's doing it when we're around," Paquin said. He learned of the stickers when one appeared in the Security Services office, and added, "The black community will be upset by this, as everyone else should be too."

Stickers were spotted this week at work stations in McLennan and outside the Stewart Biology Building. One tag reads "Don't catch AIDS," and goes on to suggest that AIDS may be avoided by not sleeping with intravenous drug users, bisexuals, or blacks. It goes on to present an uncited figure that blacks are 14 times likelier than whites to carry AIDS. A second sticker makes a call to help preserve "earth's most endangered species, the white race."

National Alliance, the US-based group responsible for the stickers, is widely considered one of the largest white supremacist organizations left. Founder William Pierce authored the *Turner Diaries*, a book linked to the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. The Alliance also recently took

over Resistance Records, a distributor and promoter for white supremacy rock bands.

The group could not be reached for comment, but the website obtained from the stickers details at length their principles and mandate. The website also boasts book ordering, tips on propaganda leafletting, and weekly radio broadcasts.

"We have an obligation to our race as a collective agent of progress. Nature has refined and honed the special qualities embodied in the Aryan race so we would be better able to fulfill the mission allotted to us," reads the site.

"After the sickness of multiculturalism, which is destroying America, Britain, and every other Aryan nation in which it is being promoted, has been swept away, we must again have a racially clean area of the earth for the further development of our people," it continues. "We will do whatever is necessary to achieve this White living space and to keep it White."

"It's really scary," said Chuta upon learning of the stickers. "Generally speaking, this isn't a problem on campus," he said. "Security should do something about what happened, but they're not going to, let's be realistic."

"There was a question when the ARA started this year of whether it was necessary on campus. This shows that it is," he said.

The upstart chapter kicked off this

year, though it has yet to get funding or official status as a campus group. Last month, a Montreal chapter of the international group led a demonstration at the Palais de Justice with the hope that eight alleged neo-nazis charged with a series of brutal assaults would be given harsh penalties that the ARA believes hate-crime perpetrators deserve. But earlier this month, the three – whose sentences included brief prison terms – were already out of jail awaiting appeals.

"In most of these cases, you can't depend on authorities for anything. That's why ARA exists," agreed Scott. Like many ARA organizers, he doesn't use his real name, explaining that intimidation tactics employed by racist groups threaten the anti-racists' safety.

Scott also saw the timing of the stickers emergence at McGill as significant. "It's interesting that this came to campus, that it should show up now," he said, noting campus events like this week's Queer McGill's Dyke Days, a black film festival slated for next week, and an ARA self-defence course set for this weekend.

By yesterday, stickers still remained in many of the locations where they had been first reported. Paquin said that their removal was the responsibility of building managers and that efforts would be made to remove the stickers as soon as possible.

BRIEFS

WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK POSITIVE

Despite an expected slowdown in the US, the world's economy will grow even faster next year, said Dr. Michael Mussa, economic counsellor and director of research at the International Monetary Fund.

In a keynote address at a conference on global economic and political prospects hosted by McGill's Faculty of Management, Mussa predicted that the recovery of the Japanese economy and conditions for growth in Europe will offset bearish tendencies in the United States.

"The widespread expectation is that the US economy will slow down next year," Mussa announced to a crowd of investors, analysts, and academics in the Samuel Bronfman Building.

But counteracting this, he said that the Japanese economy "has hit bottom and a dynamic of recovery will take over," while in Europe "monetary conditions... remain quite accommodating."

Mussa based his analysis on a 30-year low in US unemployment, the skyrocketing value of the yen, the weak value of the euro, and the turnaround in Asian GDP trends.

-Zach Dubinsky

DIPLOMATS DISAGREE ON GLOBALIZATION

High-ranking ambassadors from Singapore and India differed in their outlooks toward globalization yesterday at a conference hosted by McGill's Faculty of Management that catered to the business elite.

The conference, titled "Global perspectives on Economics, Politics, and investments," finished with a session on international politics and featured Singapore's Ambassador to the UN and High Commissioner to Canada Kishore Mahbubani and Permanent Representative of India to the UN Kamallesh Sharma.

Mahbubani opened the discussion by explaining the emergence of Asia onto the international economic stage and said that China's recent acceptance into the World Trade Organization would improve the continent's economy.

"If you allow China to develop in a global co-operative world, all will benefit," Mahbubani said. He also praised globalization, claiming that it would "reinvigorate Asian societies."

Mahbubani believes that globalization is an unstoppable force. "The most fundamental lesson is that you can't change the world," Mahbubani said. "Just learn to surf with it."

Sharma agreed with Mahbubani about China's acceptance into the WTO. "China will learn how to play by multilateral rules," said Sharma.

However, Sharma criticized the industrialized world for pushing their global agenda. "Industrialized countries should put themselves in the shoes of others," Sharma said. "The political sentiment of the South is that they're being hustled [by the North]."

Sharma also said that the industrialized countries do not fully understand the impact of globalization.

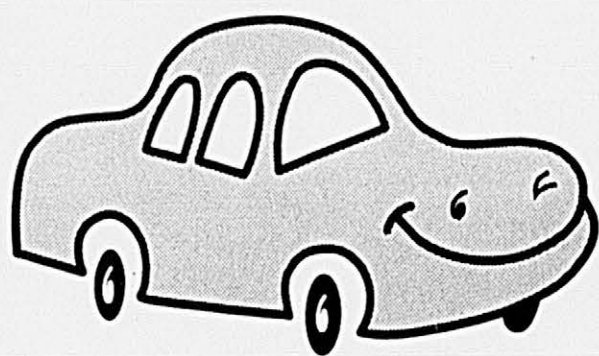
"Nobody is looking at the political aspects of globalization," warned Sharma. "Globalization as a phenomenon has winners and losers. It is globalotomy for the loser," he added.

-Jason Chow

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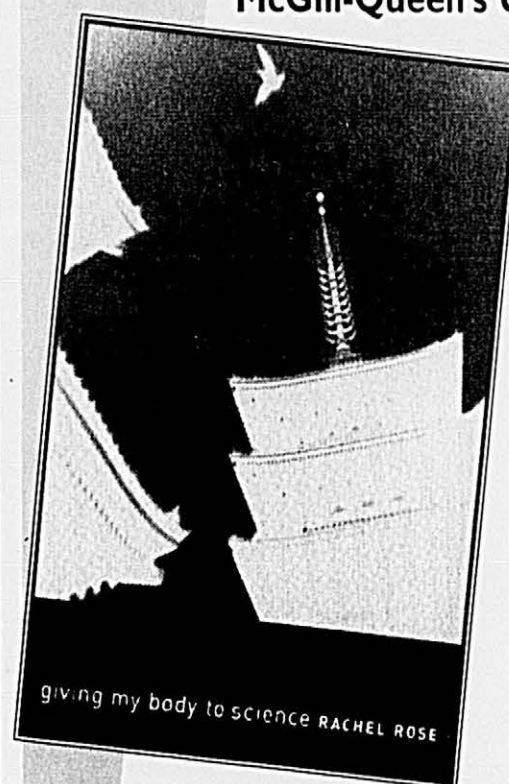
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SSMU Goes Grassroots

A lot of talk at SSMU open meeting, but do students care?

BY BRETT STORY

Well articulated and heartfelt concern about the challenges that face students at McGill, but an unsurprising reluctance to commit to direct student action were SSMU's contribution to last Tuesday's open meeting.

Looking for student input but not receiving much from the 80 students who attended, SSMU held an hour-and-a-half-long forum for students that took on a very political bent. Instead of being contributors, however, attending students spent most of their time being enlightened about the issues facing McGillers in a political climate complicated by cutbacks and a separatist Quebec government.

"What we're going to try to do today is provide the general context in which we see the biggest challenges coming to McGill students overall," said SSMU President Andrew Tischler in his opening speech. In an articulate and thorough presentation, Tischler laid out what he saw as the most pressing concerns facing students. He emphasized the impact that cuts to provincial transfer-payments have had on funding for education, and explained how SSMU has made the fight for reinvestment into education a top priority.

Tischler sees SSMU's involvement and

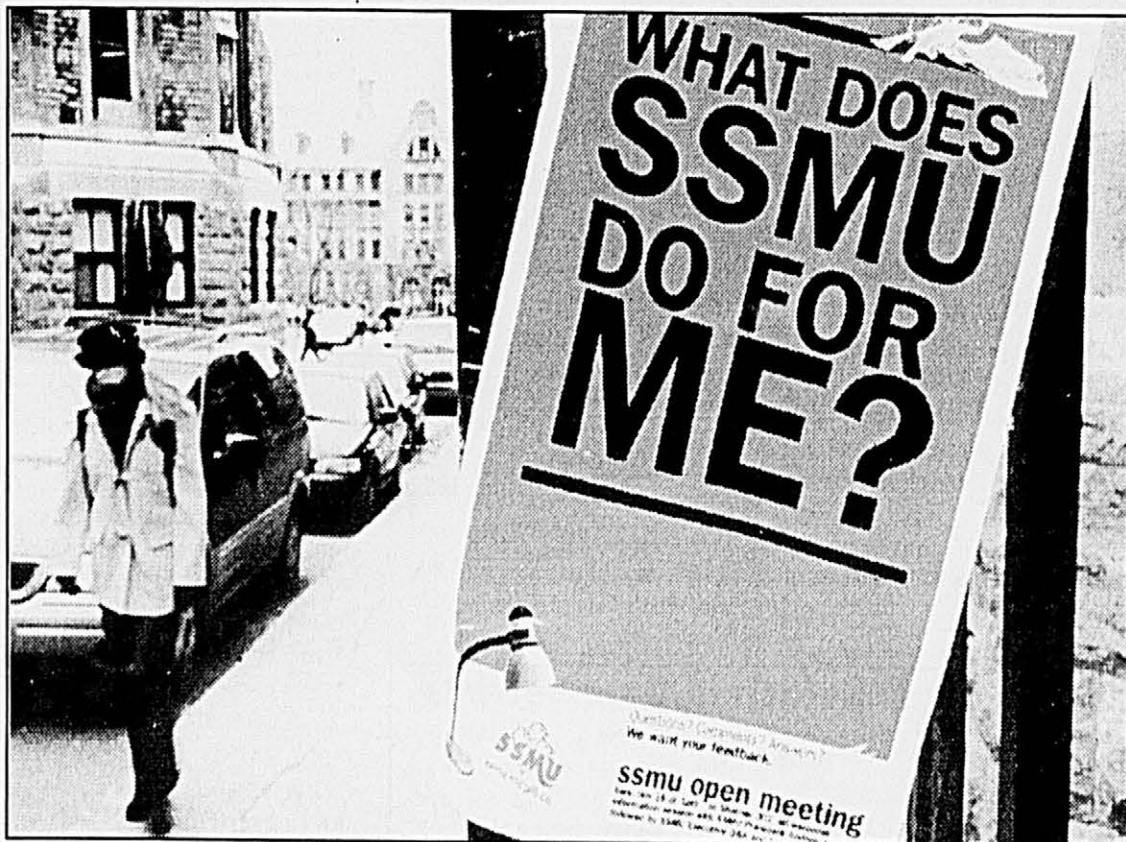
affiliation with federal lobbies such as the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations as an opportunity to bring student concerns about these cutbacks to the attention of government officials.

Tischler also conveyed his concerns about student issues on a provincial level. He spoke particularly about the lack of investment in education by the Bouchard government relative to the high level of taxes paid.

Tischler was keen to express his outrage over the issue of differential tuition. He was equally keen to boast SSMU's active role in challenging differential tuition through their lawsuit against the Quebec government, instigated last year.

Tischler also spoke of the numerous opportunities this year's SSMU has had to bring student issues to the forefront of government consciousness. These opportunities include SSMU's close relationship with the provincial lobby group La FEUQ, an upcoming Quebec Youth Summit in which the SSMU will participate, and opportunities provided by the presence of a new provincial education minister and the upcoming February provincial budget.

The decline of quality in education at McGill was also brought to the attention of the student audience, as if students were



SSMU posters around campus advertised Tuesday's open meeting

somehow unaware. "I think as students we really have to be concerned about that," said Tischler. One could possibly see some salvation in the accomplishments of this year's SSMU executive, boasted Tischler, including the renovation of the fourth floor of the Shatner building and the CNN coverage given to frosh week, as well as the new food court being developed by SSMU VP Operations Kevin McPhee and Tischler's proposed travel program. The only accomplishments having any actual relation to the issues of cutbacks and declining quality, however, have to do with the increase in monetary contributions by community members who have agreed to match dollar-for-dollar the funds given by students to the McGill Student Fund to the new student services building.

It is precisely this dependence on stu-

dent, community, and business funding that has some students concerned. In one of the only provoking questions posed to the SSMU executive during the disappointingly brief question period, Silvia Lertz, a third-year exchange student from Australia, seemed frustrated with the SSMU's emphasis on band-aid solutions to educational cutbacks. "What concerns me is that money is coming mostly...from students, from this McGill Student Fund, and that's not good enough, nor is it good enough that university can be run by business and that we have more business involvement. I think that's extremely dangerous, and something we should be turning away against," she said. She challenged the executive to explain why they were so unwilling to endorse the Canadian Federation of Students' rally held last week, and suggest-

ed that the SSMU take on a stronger leadership position in areas and campaigns such as the countrywide student strike organized for February by the CFS.

VP Community and Government Wojtek Baraniak responded that SSMU did not have time to discuss last week's CFS rally at any of their meetings before it took place, and that while the SSMU does endorse student initiative, it doesn't endorse events that promote or provoke violence.

For the amount of money it spent on advertising and promoting the event, there did not seem to be a lot of student-executive dialogue as a result. Even Tischler, although "happy to see the turnout there was," conceded that maybe the forum didn't allow for more in-depth discussion of some of the students' suggestions. In turn, students got very little from the SSMU in terms of answers and commitment to action, other than a regurgitation of the issues they face.

"I felt that they knew most of the issues that were relevant to students, however I don't feel Andrew Tischler addressed direct solutions to all of them," said Matylda Gawor, a first year student.

However, this lack of vision did not come as much of a surprise to the students that came out to the meeting. As U1 Political Science student D.J. Waletzky, put it, "No one said anything important, but no one expected them to."

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SSMU to Get in on Coke Deal?

LSA proposal would make Students' Society party to contract

BY ZACH DUBINSKY

SSMU Council will hear a motion today that would give it a crucial vantage point from which to defend students' rights and interests.

The motion, to be submitted by Law Students' Association VP External Francois Tanguay-Renaud, asks that the Students' Society of McGill University withdraw its support for McGill's proposed exclusive cold beverage agreement with Coke unless SSMU is made a full party to the deal. The Society is currently only an intervenor to the contract, a status that "grants it no substantive rights whatsoever," Tanguay-Renaud said.

"Without full party status, SSMU is merely a third party to the agreement," stated Tanguay-Renaud. "It cannot invoke any clause of the contract to its advantage, interpret the clauses of the contract, nor have any legal recourses in case of default by another party."

Most importantly, though, SSMU cannot properly protect the rights of its members unless it enjoys full party status. Given the restrictive terms of previous exclusivity deals at other universities, fears about students' rights are well-founded. As with the university bookstore deal - which prohibits faculty associations from holding their own book sales - the exclusive cold beverage agreement could inhibit student groups from

fundraising through bake sales and sponsorships. It could even ban students from wearing Pepsi clothing on campus. But because the terms of the deal are currently a secret, no student representatives can know for sure.

The Science Undergraduate Society considered similar motions at its meeting yesterday evening. SUS President Andrew Kovacs evoked the possible infringements on students' rights that an exclusivity deal

would perpetrate, pointing to a case at York University where a fan at a football game was allegedly ejected for wearing a Coke T-shirt. York University has signed an exclusive deal with Pepsi.

“Without full party status, SSMU is merely a third party to the agreement.”

Consequently, Tanguay-Renaud sees the LSA's request as justified.

"Because of SSMU's mandate to protect student rights, views, and liberties, this is not an excessive claim," he said. "Rather, it constitutes a minimum."

It would not be unprecedented for SSMU to become a party to the contract. Tanguay-Renaud pointed out that the Alma Mater Society at the University of British Columbia and the Fédération des Associations Etudiantes at the Université de Montréal enjoy this status.

Tanguay-Renaud will also introduce a second motion to Council that calls for the highly guarded contract to be made public, a feat that would be unprecedented.

Early yesterday, LSA passed two parallel resolutions. The first predicated LSA's support for the exclusivity deal on SSMU being made a full party, while the second called for the contract itself to be made public.

"If the cold beverage agreement goes ahead, you lose the right to choose," an SUS council member stated.

SUS voted to advocate that SSMU be made a party to the contract, but stopped short of supporting the LSA's second motion, which Kovacs saw as "definitely more controversial." However, SUS was in favour of the principle of making the contract public, and would support a less strongly-worded resolution. Kovacs even stated that if student concerns about freedom of expression were not addressed and the cold beverage agreement failed, "that's not the end of the world."

Matthew Erskine, president of the Medical Students' Society, confirmed that the MSS would also support the LSA's first motion.

SSMU executives could not be reached for comment.

U of Saskatchewan students fight differential tuition

REGINA (CUP) - Despite strong criticism from faculty and staff, the University of Saskatchewan is considering an option that would introduce differential tuition on campus.

In late October, hundreds of students attended a U of S Council meeting where a budget committee recommended a vote on differential tuition. The Council - made up of deans, students and a large number of faculty - rejected the report in response to student concerns.

But according to U of S Vice-President (Academic) Michael Atkinson, University administrators are still considering introducing differential tuition. The option is likely to be presented to the university's Board of Governors, the body with the power to determine tuition.

If implemented, differential tuition would mean students in programs with a high delivery cost - like, medicine, law or dentistry - would pay a significantly higher amount of tuition than students in lower cost programs, like arts and science.

The reasoning behind the proposal is that students should assume a proportionate amount of the cost of their program. Moreover, students in professional programs, who would see the highest tuition increase, can expect to earn more upon graduation than students in non-professional programs.

Many faculty and students at U of S see fundamental flaws in imposing differential tuition. They argue that differential tuition would make students pay the price for government cutbacks.

McGill University similarly recommended and attempted to justify differential tuition for professional programs in its proposal submitted to the Minister of Education, *Tradition and Innovation: An International University in a City of Knowledge*.

-by Hannah Scissons

SFU student aims to become youngest councillor in BC history

BURNABY, BC (CUP) - A Simon Fraser University student is trying to become the youngest city councillor in British Columbia history. Darck Faichuk, an 18-year-old second-year political science student, is running for a spot on Surrey City Council.

Faichuk, who has lived his entire life in Surrey - a suburb of Vancouver - is one of a growing number of teenagers and youth involved in Lower-Mainland politics. This year alone, there are 18 candidates on the BC Youth Coalition slate.

Faichuk, however, is an independent candidate and is paying for his campaign out of his own pocket. And he says that even for him, the student demographic is difficult to reach.

"Youth don't realize how many of them there are," Faichuk told Canadian University Press. "They far outnumber older people and if they voted in a block they could take over a government." He adds, however, that, "trying to get a hold of SFU students is really, really hard."

Faichuk says his biggest challenge in the campaign has been financial.

"I've already spent \$1,000 and my message has hardly gotten out," he said.

His competitors, the Surrey Electors, have a budget of \$160,000.

But the teenage student insists that besides his youth, his integrity will set him apart from the other candidates.

"My point throughout the election has been that I'm not going to make any false promises," he said. "There's no time like the present to stand up and take a stand."

If elected, Faichuk's responsibilities would include managing Surrey's \$300-million budget and its bylaws.

Surrey civic elections will be held on November 20. Twenty-two candidates are running for eight councillor positions.

-by John Kennedy

Canadian Campus Briefs

Let Your Speakers Keep the Peace

BY LEA JACOBSON

So your amp goes up to 11. I think that's super. And the purpose of this wonderful contraption is to play your choice of musical entertainment as loudly as possible. Great. And of course, you take full advantage of this opportunity. There's one of you on every floor. And in most cases, you know who you are.

You exercised this form of expression when living at home, too. Throughout the day and during all hours of the night, no doubt. Your parents who unfortunately do not share in your musical preference may have become slightly irritated. They may have yelled and screamed, tried to ground you, and maybe even threatened to deport you. But in the end, their threats never really held up, because they are your parents, and are obliged by a combination of parental instincts, social standards, and various laws imposed on them by Child Protective Services, to love you anyway.

However, if you haven't figured it out already, there's something you should know about life here at rez. You're co-inhabitants didn't give birth to you!

It is not always easy to discern whether the people on your hall or floor enjoy being serenaded by your choice of music or if your stereo is just too loud. For this reason, I've compiled a general list of guidelines and indications.

1) Under no circumstances is loud music to be played before 12 pm. Even if you believe that all of your neighbors have morning classes, they may have chosen to sleep through these classes, so please respect their rights to do so. On weekends, you should wait until at least 1 or 2 in the afternoon. When people do not get enough sleep, they tend to become cranky, and may just take their aggressions out on innocent music fans such as yourself.

2) Most rez dwellers agree that the most acceptable time of day to crank the volume on your stereo is between 12 and 8 pm. During this period of time, your co-inhabitants are most likely to be engaged in various methods of procrastination. Given these circumstances, any such means of distraction are not only acceptable, but are welcome. However, after 8, a select few overachievers in your hall may decide it is time for some hard-core studying. Other students, when faced with the prospect of hitting the books, may suddenly become very tired and opt to go to bed early. Remember that no one likes to be deprived of sleep (see 1).

3) Do not ignore the fact that sound waves can travel vertically as well. It may be of an advantage for you to explore other floors of your rez and see if the sound emitted from your stereo is audible there. Who knows. Unbeknownst to you, the person dwelling directly above or below you could very well possess a voo-doo doll with your picture on it. You don't want to mess with that stuff.

4) Though you might think that it's a fun idea, or a clever physics experiment to see how high you have to turn the dial on your amp in order for the objects on your dresser to begin shaking from the vibrations, understand that there are others in your rez who do not share in your amusement and/or scientific curiosity.

5) Keep communication lines open! How else are you to know if your floor mates are secretly plotting against you? It is always possible that your neighbours share your taste in music. However, they could just as easily be dedicated to its banishment from popular culture. You'll never know until you ask.

6) Be sensitive. If you know that your next door neighbor has an exam the next morning, or if the person across the hall from you has the flu, try to put yourself in their place.

7) Techno and house music is meant to be played loudly. I sympathize. However, you must also realize that for people with either a headache, a hangover, or an overdose of caffeine, its loud and relentless bass can easily be mistaken for the sound of nails being repeatedly hammered into their heads by little imaginary men.

I hope that this compilation has been of some help. There are countless ways of getting people to hate you here at rez, (like, for example, insulting the "social skills" of the workers in the cafeteria at which you have to eat all of your meals every day), so try not to make blasting your music one of them. I am not trying to condemn you or your musical preference. I only stress that there are times and places where it is acceptable, and where it is not. Remember, you have to live with these people for the rest of the year.

letters



REMEMBRANCE DAY PIECE A DISGRACE

The list of "50 Things To Do on Remembrance Day" that you printed on November 11 was a disgrace. Firstly, there was no indication of who produced these facts and ideas. Secondly, it would have been worthwhile to check some of these figures as many of them seemed a little too round and should have rung some alarm bells. Thirdly, what exactly were some of these provocative suggestions supposed to illustrate?

The 10th suggestion was to put a soldier in a room with two generals of equal rank. One general was to order the soldier to sit and the other general was to order him/her to stand.

This scenario would not prove anything: put a child in first grade or a student in fourth year in a room with both their parents giving conflicting orders and see what happens. The result would be about as relevant and as elucidating.

The list was an ignorant mish-mash of unconfirmed facts and pointless illustrations that should not have been printed in The McGill Daily.

Tyler Hargreaves
U3 History/Political Science

NOSTALGIA IS NOT CRACK

In response to the anonymous "On Track-On Crack" column in the Remembrance day issue, I'd ask your editor to

Ilan Muskat
U2 Psychology

In Defence of CASA and Pragmatic Lobbying

BY WOJTEK BARANIAK

While I thoroughly enjoyed the fluidity of Jeff Roberts' writing in The Daily's Hyde Park of November 15, I did notice a number of fallacies in his arguments. It is these inconsistencies that I would like to address.

Roberts contends that the Canadian Alliance of Student Associations' (CASA) "antics" have placed the interests of students – the restoration of funding to post-secondary education – on the federal government's back burner. I respectfully beg to differ. Indeed, the federal Minister of Finance, Paul Martin,

scholarships and the tax credit on student loans in the 1998 federal budget, I firmly believe that our pragmatic approach towards government has been effective.

Roberts goes on to draw a parallel between the Society's lobbying efforts, and—inexplicably—the Council's decision not to send a letter endorsing the British government's extradition of General Pinochet! He goes so far as to call the executives "gutless." I am hard pressed to understand the link between a letter regarding the trial of a foreign general and the current state of funding for post-secondary institutions in Canada. Zealous believers in the "butterfly effect" may have a keener understanding of Mr. Roberts' words than I.

Finally, in response to Mr. Roberts' naive contention that all SSMU executives are products of years of private schooling, I can unequivocally say that I am not. People often forget that student leaders are, first and foremost, students. I personally have a student loan. Regardless of whether my intentions are altruistic, my ultimate desire is to reduce the debt burden on students. Moreover, as a future graduate of McGill, I am intent on doing my part to secure the reputation and quality of education at this university for generations to come.

hyde park



Slibel & Lander

Your forum for all the latest campus scoops

Irwin Cotler's fame as an international human rights lawyer helped him win over 90 percent of the vote in Monday's by-election in Mount Royal, but the sheer lameness of his opponents no doubt helped him out as well. Of particular note is NDP candidate Serge Granger. Granger's impressive resume on the party's website notes that he is a history prof at UQAM and a long-time social activist. But the crowning achievement by far is the statement that he "has travelled extensively on four continents, giving him an immediate understanding of globalization and its repercussions." Surely this is the last thing the Knee-Dippers need

in these times of fiscal restraint....Here's a real shocker—the Maclean's survey may not be the gospel truth after all! This realization is compounded by the fact that Ann Dowsett Johnston, the assistant managing editor of Maclean's, went to two universities: Queen's for her undergraduate and then U of T for a further degree. Hmm....These universities have been #1 and #2 for the past three years. Perhaps an honorary doctorate is in order...

Slibel & Lander welcomes your juicy tidbits, which are gladly printed anonymously. Forward them to slibel_lander@hotmail.com.



On Track:

The food at last Tuesday's open SSMU meeting. Although the tortellini and stir-fry left something to be desired, the pseudo-General Tao's chicken merits a special place in all our hearts. Interestingly, only Pepsi was served: could another CBA be brewing?

On Crack:

Ben Johnson, for proudly claiming the title of most disgraced Canadian athlete of all time. As if racing a horse wasn't low enough, he decides to be caught for a record third time. He may not be on crack, but he's definitely not on "track."

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ARE DRUG COMPANIES THE BAD GUYS?

"Many clinical trials done do not improve present drugs or make new drugs available. They are just for the pharmaceutical companies to improve their financial situation," says Dr. Shree Mulay, director of the McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women.

Dr. Steven Grover, director of Clinical Epidemiology at Montreal General Hospital, agrees that dollars and cents are the major driving force behind pharmaceutical companies. Grover says "Most clinical trials tend to focus, at least the early trials, on the patients in who the people designed the trial believe the intervention will do the most good. The companies who invest millions and millions of dollars choose patients with whom the trial will be most successful. The worst thing for these companies is to spend all that money and get a negative result, an inconclusive result. When you look at numbers around cardiovascular disease, the reason they tend to choose men is that you minimize the risk of a negative result."

Mulay believes that pharmaceutical companies think that women are a large cost, both in the amount of groups needed to adequately represent women (pre-menopausal, menopausal, post-menopausal) and the potential legal liability that women of reproductive age carry. It is simply more cost-effective for the companies to exclude women in clinical trials.

Not all medical professionals have this mentality. Dr. Mark Wainberg, the president of the International AIDS society, says "It's a myth to think that drug companies are all out there to take advantage of people and make as much money as possible. The reality is that life expectancy in countries like Canada has been extended by fantastic amounts in the last five decades. And a great deal of that is in fact due to drug development and the pharmaceutical companies. They just happen to make a profit along the way."

Wainberg goes on to say that brand-name drug companies often go to developing countries and try to educate the people there. However, they do not even sell their drugs in those countries, since the generic companies have the market.

"At least in that context I see [brand-name drug companies] as altruistic. I hope that's not too naïve," said Wainberg.

From Lab Rats to Men to Market

Where are the women in clinical trials?

BY JENNIFER VO

In 1997, a number of female AIDS patients walked into the Institute of Infectious Diseases in Milan, Italy. They complained of adverse effects in their treatment with lamivudine, an antiretroviral drug. The women's body fat had been redistributed over their bodies, leaving them with spindly legs and a ballooned upper body. Although their weight did not change, this redistribution of fat, called lipodystrophy, caused wasting of the buttocks and thighs, painful hypertrophy of the breasts, and increased abdominal girth. This was not an expected side effect of the lamivudine. Why did this happen to these women?

The drug, already on the market, had not been sufficiently tested on females in clinical trials. In the area of AIDS research, most of the clinical studies, including those on lamivudine, were done exclusively on men.

It should be noted that the field of AIDS is somewhat different from other fields of research. Dr. Richard Lalonde, director of one of the HIV treatment units at the McGill AIDS Centre, explained, "For drugs in the field of HIV there's a tremendous need, a sense of urgency to bring drugs rapidly to the marketplace. In fact, the drugs are brought to human testing before they've even completed all the animal studies."

Rushing through clinical trials may have negative consequences for all those involved. However, specifically dealing with women, Lalonde states that even today women are still under-represented in clinical trials.

NOT ALWAYS THE CASE

Women haven't always been neglected by scientific research. In fact, there was a time when women were popular subjects in research. Their reproductive abilities intrigued medical researchers. This all changed in the late 1960s and 1970s with the Thalidomide crisis.

It began in the United States when Thalidomide, a drug prescribed for morning sickness from 1956 to 1961, resulted in babies born with severe birth defects. In 1971, evidence emerged that diethylstilbestrol (DES), an anti-miscarriage drug, had carcinogenic effects later on in life in

daughters whose mothers had taken the drug. The furor and lawsuits that faced the pharmaceutical industry resulted in serious changes, and women were seen as a liability in research trials.

"The general rule of epidemiology is that you don't generalize to beyond the population that you study. It is extremely dangerous to be generalizing to women without taking differences into account."

In 1971, in an attempt to prevent further crises, the US Food and Drug Administration adopted new guidelines governing clinical trials. The guidelines stated that women of childbearing potential (all women except those who were post-menopausal or had been surgically sterilized) must be excluded from Phase I studies, the first stage of clinical trials which determines safety and dosage of the tested drug or treatment.

Dr. Steven Grover, the director for the analysis of cost-effective care and the director of the division of clinical epidemiology at the Montreal General Hospital, mentions that this policy essentially restricted women from all clinical research.

"If the researchers have done all the Phase I trials on men, they don't want to start flipping over to women afterwards." It was also recommended that women be excluded from large-scale, long-term clinical studies. Again, the main reasoning behind the policy was out of fear of litigation, as the increased potential of pregnancy of the women in the trials posed serious questions about side effects.

In 1993, the FDA lifted the ban. The new guidelines suggested that women be included in clinical trials, but did not require it. Even today, women's reproductive capabilities are still one of the barriers that prevent them from being represented in clinical trials to the same extent as men. Dr. Mark Wainberg, director of the McGill AIDS Centre and president of the International AIDS Society, agrees. "There is a very serious possibility that the drug [tested] could have teratogenic effects and result in deformations. It would simply be unfair to subject a fetus to drugs that we know so little about."

CANADIAN GUIDELINES

Although these two guideline examples are taken from the US, as Dr. Beth Abramson, director of women's cardiovascular health at St. Michael's Hospital

and assistant professor at the University of Toronto says that, when it comes to medical policies, "what translates in the states generally also translates into Canada."

Take for instance the National Institutes of Health in the United States. The NIH is the major organization that funds medical research in America. As of 1993, their new policy stated that women are required to be included in clinical trials if women are intended to receive the drug/treatment to be marketed, and the NIH will not fund any project that does not comply with its policies.

In 1994, the Medical Research Council of Canada created a similar policy. The MRC is the major federal agency responsible for funding biomedical health research in Canada. The MRC's policy is that both men and women must be included in clinical trials ("if the target intervention is intended for use by both men and women"). Adherence to their guidelines will be taken into account when assigning priority for funding.

According to Mary Valiquette, program coordinator of clinical trials at the MRC, the MRC's policy as of March, 1994, is the one that still stands today.

As for Health Canada, the organization that approves drugs before they reach the market, they do not have any legislation pertaining to women and clinical trials.

"The number of publications on male rats outnumber those on female rats; that gives you an indication of how experiments are designed and what the biases are."

So without such legislation, to what extent are women being excluded or under-represented in clinical trials? At the International Conference on AIDS in 1989 it was stated that AZT, an AIDS drug, was not adequately tested on women: women only represented 5.8 per cent of trial enrollment. Eight years later, in 1997, a study done on combining didanosine, zidovudine, and lamivudine (all drugs used in the treatment of AIDS), published in the New England Journal of Medicine had a female representation of 15.5 percent.

HOW SERIOUS IS THE PROBLEM?

How serious is the problem of women being underrepresented in clinical research? It depends on who is answering the question. Dr. Abby Lippman, professor of epidemiology and biostatistics here at McGill, says that "the situation is very serious. Many things that are being done on men are applied to women without any knowledge of whether it is appropriate to women. The general rule of epidemiology is that you don't generalize to beyond the population that you study. It is extremely dangerous to be generalizing to women without taking differences into account."

On the other hand, Grover says "I still believe that most of the studies done on men are relevant to women. I would like to see them repeated in women of course, but any of the major risk factors that have been analyzed between men and women look pretty much the same, for cardiovascular disease."

Grover goes on to say that cardiovascular disease is different from other diseases in that men and women do not have the same risks of developing heart complications. Women have an inherent lower risk, for reasons that medical professionals do not completely understand.

"If you're looking at the risks of developing a disease, and if women have less of a risk, that's a reason that they can be under-represented." However, Grover mentions that for diseases in which men and women have the same risks, there is no good reason for women to be underrepresented.

Differences in risks are one of the reasons offered as to why women are under-represented in clinical trials. Abramson, who also does work in cardiovascular

disease, says that inaccessibility may be a contributing factor as well. Women with cardiovascular disease tend to be older than men with the disease. The example that Abramson gives is "if I have, all else being equal, a 65-year-old male patient and a 75-year-old female patient, there may be barriers keeping the woman from

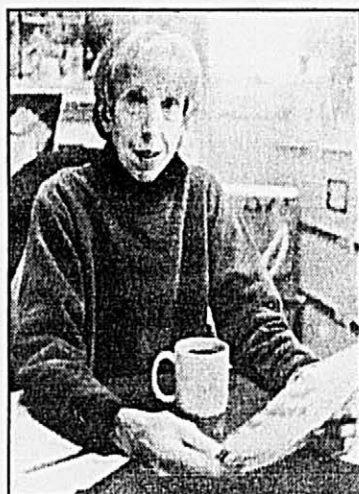
being involved in clinical trials. For example, the 65-year-old may drive or have access to taking public transit to the hospital for every six-month visit, but the 75-year-old may have difficulties partaking in the research.

Another point along the same lines that Grover gives is that men with heart disease are often young and their disease is isolated. "It's not like they've got heart disease, osteoporosis, and mild kidney failure. They have one single disease."

Abramson agrees, "If you are sick in other ways you may not be a candidate for trials."



Dr. Mark Wainberg



Dr. Abby Lippman

In the Interest of Women's Health

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•Women in Clinical Trials

November 18

•The Birth Control Pill

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November 25



Other reasons offered outside of the cardiovascular field as to why women are under-represented in clinical trials are that women are too variable. Dr. Shree Mulay, the director of the McGill Centre for Research and Teaching on Women, says "More groups are needed to adequately test women, you must take into account pre-menopausal, menopausal, and post-menopausal women. Even the monthly cycling may have an effect on the drug tested."

In fact, the menstrual cycle is one of the classical reasons given why women are excluded from trials, along with the childbearing potential reason.

To elaborate on the potential risks for childbearing, it can be argued that if the women who agree to participate in the clinical trial agree to use a reliable form of contraception then they should be allowed to participate. However, the pharmaceutical companies and the medical researchers fear things beyond the woman's control. She may unintentionally get pregnant, so often it is safer to exclude women of reproductive-age altogether.

that women have in the workplace.

Wainberg, of the McGill AIDS Centre, says that the exclusion of women in clinical trials involving potent AIDS drugs in the past (because of the concern about pregnancy) may have prevented some of the women from improving because they were denied access to the drugs that were only available through clinical trials.

Lalonde, also from the McGill AIDS Centre, thinks that the under-representation of women in clinical trials may have "slowed down our appreciation of the differences between men and women and how they respond to treatment." He goes on to say, "The doses of drugs that we select are taken out of the middleages, a one-size-fits-all sort of thing, and as you know the body size of women is generally smaller than the body size of men. So when we give the same dose to women as we do to men, we may be overdosing them."

A final example that Mulay mentions is the Physician's Health Study of 1989, which found that low-dose aspirin therapy reduced the risk of subsequent myocardial infarction in

“If you're looking at the risks of developing a disease, and if women have less of a risk, that's a reason that they can be under-represented.”

Lippman, in the Department of Epidemiology, says that another reason is "people in positions of medical authority are men and naturally they would want to know what affects them."

There are many reasons given why women are under-represented, but as Mulay notes, these biases against women are there from the start.

"The number of publications on male rats outnumber those on female rats. That gives you an indication of how experiments are designed and what the biases are."

CONSEQUENCES

What exactly are the consequences of these biases against women in clinical trials? The lamivudine case is one of the major examples of negative consequences.

Lippman talks about the Occupational Cancer Study recently done here in Montreal. Although it is not technically a clinical trial, but an on-going study on cohort groups, women were excluded for the same reasons they are excluded in clinical trials. With women excluded from the study, there is no data on the cancer risks

22,071 men. No women were included in the study. Later, when women were given the therapy, it turned out that the women did not benefit from the treatment the way men did.

In the exclusion or under-representation of women in clinical research some consequences are more serious than others.

Mulay says "the pressure from the women's community has resulted in better inclusion of women. There is a definite improvement, but we still have a long way to go."

Despite their varying views on how serious the situation is, all of the health professionals interviewed believe that the necessary steps are slowly being taken to correct the problem. However, the problem must first be acknowledged as such. Men and women, both as patients and researchers, must ensure that clinical trials are representative of the population they will eventually serve.

According to Abramson, "The burden is on everyone: the medical profession, the patient and the rest of society need to recognize that women need to be more involved in clinical research."

The Lone Ranger of Architecture

Canadian architect Douglas Cardinal visits McGill

BY JAN SCHOTTE

When Canadian architect Douglas Cardinal began building in 1965, he did so in a landscape dominated by rectilinear buildings. The continuation of this tradition of boxes was advocated by most of Cardinal's Modernist colleagues, who were trying to create even straighter lines and cleaner edges. Douglas Cardinal felt that these shapes were unnatural and made humans feel uneasy. He looked for a building style that would be more in tune with both nature and humanity. In a lecture given on Tuesday in the auditorium of the architecture building, Cardinal defined his more natural approach to building, in a review of his life's work.

Douglas Cardinal's first major project, St. Mary's Church in Red Deer, Alberta, completely avoided straight lines and evoked the forms of Alberta's badlands. Its smooth curvilinear forms were realized in concrete covered by masonry. This building established Mr. Cardinal's signature style, best known to Canadians through the Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec.

Despite his emphasis on natural forms, Cardinal was proud to point out his firm's early use of modern technology, boasting that his was one of the first firms in the industry to computerize. Like Frank Gehry's recent Bilbao museum in Spain, Cardinal's St. Mary's Church would have been impossible to construct without the use of computers. At that time the use of computer technology in design was almost unheard of, and St. Mary's was dismissed as impossible. He was told that the engineering for the complicated catenary roof he was attempting would take seven men 100 years to calculate.

Cardinal remained unconvinced of the

seeming impossibility of the project and told Tuesday's audience that "Creativity doesn't remain in the realm of the known." Trying to push their artistic vision into the unknown, Cardinal's firm consulted several mathematicians and, using a supercomputer in Chicago, was able to engineer the roof's structure.

Much to his displeasure, Douglas Cardinal is in the news today more for scandal than for the innovation of his design work. He was commissioned several years ago to design the National Museum of the American Indian, an offshoot of the Smithsonian Institution. The building will be located on the last vacant lot on the Mall in Washington DC, home to many of the national institutions of the United States. His design process involved close cooperation with elders from America's native communities.

Soon after the completed design was critically acclaimed and received the approval of all the required regulatory bodies, Cardinal was pulled from the project. A New York architect, who was instructed to copy Cardinal's design in order to maintain approval of the project, replaced him. This move came as a complete shock to Cardinal.

"The Smithsonian wouldn't accept forgeries in their own collection, why should they now accept a forgery of my work?" he asked.

In addition to the personal affront to Cardinal, the action has raised more general questions as to the issue of intellectual property in the architectural profession. There is a move towards the use of separate architects for design and production, often separating the original designer from the execution of their work. This growing trend, often spurred by political motiva-



Alberta Badlands - source of Cardinal's inspiration

tions, is a source of dismay to Cardinal.

Officials from the Museum of the American Indian envisioned the project as an opportunity for Natives to tell their own story and hoped the museum would embody a new spirit of cooperation between Native and other Americans. Cardinal believes this opportunity has been lost.

"This museum was meant to be a monument to the next 500 years," he stated. "Now it will be a monument to the last 500." The design approved by the native elders was put aside in favour of a counterfeit.

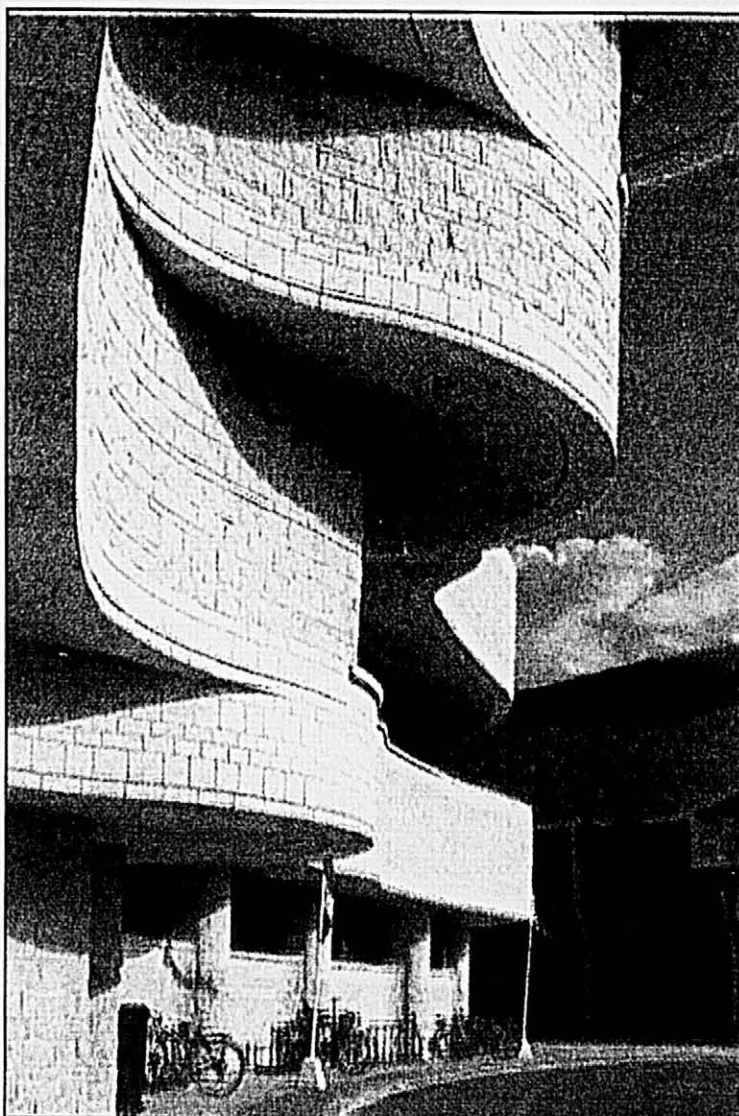
The cloud of controversy surrounding the Museum of the American Indian lead the current head of the Smithsonian Institution to announce his resignation, effective January. The director is leaving because the architect chosen to replace Cardinal was a personal friend.

This type of behaviour didn't surprise Cardinal, who displays a deep-seated disdain for the rich and powerful. "The question is, as architects, whether we should build pyramids for the people in power or work for social change," he stated.

His appetite for social change has prompted Douglas Cardinal's extensive involvement in Native American communities. This work has encompassed building schools and housing and devising town plans, including one for Oujé-Bougoumou in Quebec, which won a United Nations award for environmental sensitivity.

Cardinal outlined how his own native heritage instilled in him a heightened sensitivity to nature and a consensus-building approach in his design work. He explained that he prefers to talk to the future users of a building, such as teachers and students in the case of a school, instead of bureaucrats. With the future users gathered, he uses consensus building to develop a design "vision." But after achieving that vision, he advocated being completely unreasonable to outside pressures. "If you are reasonable, then people will reason you out of your commitments," he said.

Douglas Cardinal's unique design approach couples human and environmental sensitivity with the hard-headedness required to defend these ideals. This principled vision has shown that it is possible for today's designers to realize projects that challenge the continued dominance of rectilinear buildings and inhumane spaces.



The Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec was designed by Douglas Cardinal

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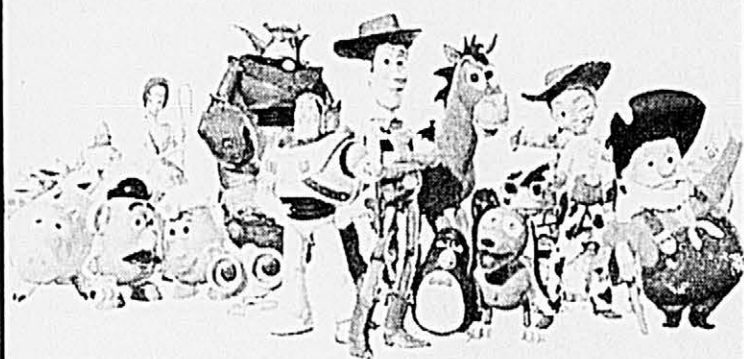
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THE BOOKSHELF

Culture Jam: The Uncooling of America™

BY KALLE LASN
EAGLE, BROOK AND MORROW
\$39.95
247 PAGES

The American Dream is dead. The myth of the two-parent, 2.5-child, one dog, two-car house-hold is dead. The halcyon days where *Leave it to Beaver* reigned and mom was always there with a home-cooked meal have been replaced by kids stabbing kids over Pokémon cards and Little Susie wondering if daddy is ever going to shake that nasty heroin habit.

According to Kalle Lasn, the founder of *Adbusters* magazine, we no longer know who we are. In his new book *Culture Jam: The Uncooling of America™*, Lasn declares, "Cool is the opiate of our time, and...we have grown dependent on it to maintain our identities of inclusion." We no longer define ourselves by what we believe in and what our core values are, but instead by what we wear, what we drive, what cologne we use, and so on.

"You're cool if you're not unique—if you have the look and feel that bear the unmistakable stamp of America™. Hair by Paul Mitchell. Khakis by The Gap. Car by BMW. Attitude by Nike. Pet phrases by Letterman. Politics by Bill Maher," declares Lasn.

The core argument of Lasn's excellent and intensely thought-provoking book is that, in our quest to belong, we have sacrificed our culture and essentially ourselves. As Lasn says, "the most powerful narcotic in the world is the promise of belonging. And belonging is best achieved by conforming to the prescriptions of America™."

This desire to belong to the American version of Brand Cool exists not only in North America, but also throughout the world. Everyone wants the American Dream. Throughout Africa, Asia and the rest of the developing world, Coke, Nike, and Marlboro are the new lingua franca. Community, tradition and cultural heritage are essentially being replaced by "a barren American monoculture." As Lasn puts it, "What does it mean when a whole culture dreams the same dream?"

Much of the basic elements of Lasn's argument comes from the Situationists, a group of European artists "who first applied the spirit of anarchy to modern media culture." A group interested only in freedom and any means of getting it, they "believed that many times a day, each of us comes to a little fork in the path. We can then do one of two things: Act the way we normally, reflexively act, or do something a little risky and wild, but genuine." Their main point is

that we can choose to live the same empty consumerist lives where the only high comes from a new purchase, or we can live as "a moral, poetic, erotic, and almost spiritual refusal to cooperate with demands of consumer culture."

Lasn argues that the planet can no longer support the lifestyle of the affluent North American conspicuous consumer. Economic progress is slowing down the planet. When the reader has a closer look at this argument, it is hard not to understand Lasn's perspective. He asks, "How much harm does a company have to do before we question it's right to exist?"

To be honest I think he's right. What has any major corporation done for you lately? The last time you went to a bank, how long did you wait in line, because there was only one teller? When you wear a hat emblazoned with a Nike swoosh, are you aware of the politics of child labour behind the hat, or even the fact that, as a walking billboard, you are essentially prostituting yourself to corporate culture?

Beyond the goal of informing the reader as to what exactly is wrong with today's hypercapitalist, Lasn offers solutions and methods for change. For Lasn, change begins with a moment of truth, where one has a political awakening outlining the way the world works. The world Lasn proposes is "wilder and more interesting than your world in every way. It's radical democracy — people telling governments and corporations what to do instead of the other way around. It's empowered citizens deciding for themselves what's 'cool' — not a society of consumer drones suckling at the corporate teat."

It's about undertaking a life of what Lasn calls voluntary simplicity, by obtain-

ing the maximum of simplicity with the minimum of consumption. This is radical stuff, but, if you think about it, it makes sense. The notion of economic progress can only last so long, for it is characterized by finite terrain. We can only push our planet so far before the destruction we have wreaked begins to bite back.

Our lives have been reduced to the spectacle which we no longer control. Lasn puts forward the argument that "real living has been replaced by pre-packaged experiences and media-created events." We are no longer in charge of our lives, the spontaneity is gone. The road trip, as defined in Jack Kerouac's seminal *On The Road*, has been turned into a car commercial — a *Lonely Planet* cliché. One has only to look at the three-ring circus of the O.J Simpson trial to see how the premise of justice has been sullied by the concept of the media spectacle.

What Lasn proposes is the culture jam. According to him, we all have the potential to be culture jammers, but it is those who have that "moment of truth," those that can "take daily leaps of faith and commit acts that take them outside market-structured consciousness long enough to get a taste of real living." An act of a culture jammer can range from the tiny and indiscriminate to huge spontaneous reactions to our corporate culture.

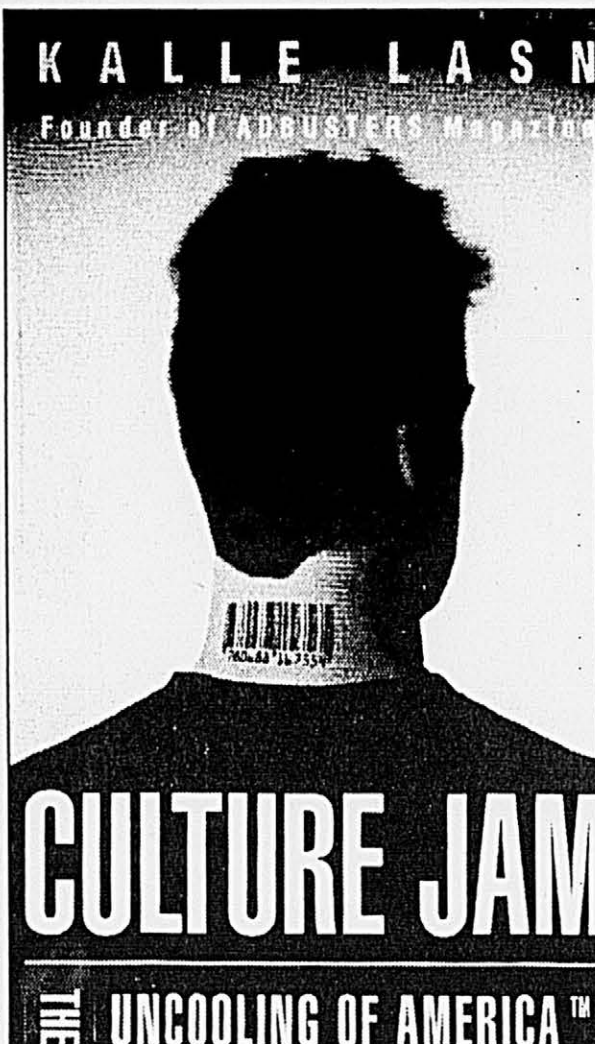
"Culture jamming is, at root, just a metaphor for stopping the flow of spectacle long enough to adjust your set." When you witness an act of subvertisement, such as spray painting skeletons on a fashion ad in the metro station, it is an attempt to break the media-induced trance.

There is a postmodernist cynicism that exists within First World culture today that breeds docility and apathy among the ones who should care the most.

Lasn draws the parallel between soma, the pleasure drug in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, and the mass media as we know it today. "Both keep the masses tranquilized and pacified, and maintain the social order....Both encourage uniformity of behaviour."

"There is no democracy on the airwaves," says Lasn. As his book so clearly illustrates, we are at a junction in society. We, the masses, can continue with our apathetic, corporatist ways, bowing to Tommy, Calvin, and Ralph, or we can forge a new path, creating a new social order based on the ideas of the people.

As much as these ideas are radical and shocking, they are thought-provoking. Whether you are on the Left or Right of the political spectrum, everyone can benefit from the ideas in this book. It is a manifesto of change that should not be ignored. —Le'Nise Brothers



To the New Owner of My Playstation

BY JOHN ARTVED

Here's how it adds up. Thieves one, me nothing. Unless you count my inner contentment and my overall enlightenment towards nirvana, they're winning.

Allow me to explain. Last weekend, someone stole my Playstation right out of our common room. But this explanation requires a little background. Let's go back to last year, my senior year of high school. I spent so much time with my beloved Playstation, it was dubbed my girlfriend (by me). I played it enough to get every extra guy in Tekken 3 (if you don't know what I'm talking about, you don't deserve to live). I love my Playstation as much as I have ever loved any woman. We have a lot of memories. Pity me.

The loss of my beloved prompted me to seek out the arcades on St. Catherine last weekend. What I was confronted with disappointed the hell out of me. I'm sorry, but arcade games suck these days. It's all racing games. Yeah, driving. That's some simulated fun. When I play video games, I want to do all the violent, horrible things that were deemed socially unacceptable by my parents and society in general.

This is how us geeks release our aggression. Basically, I want all the simulated violence my desensitized little mind can handle. With arcades today, I have the choice between driving a stock car, an F1, a Porsche, or playing virtual soccer. Things are desperate. Then again, these are desperate times. Golfers are falling from the sky, hurricanes are being named Lenny and the IRA is considering disarmament. Considering the vivid insanity and desperation of our times, can I really be that surprised about the state of video arcades?

The only good game to appear in the past five years is Tekken. There's something to be said for Virtua Fighter and all the Street Fighter games, but really they're not giving us much to go on. Arcade games reached their peak with two games. Ninja Turtles and X-Men. And no, for all you new-school people, not the one-on-one fighting X-Men, I mean the one where you could have like four people playing at once and there were a series of levels to defeat. The ninja turtles game followed a similar outline.

So who cares? While video games have little to do with our common conception of



art, there's a lot going on there we don't think about. The graphics themselves are the obvious artistic element in video games, but they have to work with a combination of other factors in creating the whole entity that is the video game. It must be appealing and attractive. It must have fluid, smooth controls. There has to be some originality in the concept. There must be a number of characters to choose from. For these things to be so pasthetic, the creativity that is prominent in the artistic mind is necessary.

That's why X-Men is as good as arcade games will ever get. You have a familiar concept with a choice of familiar characters. You also have graphical representations and physical control over your favorite comic characters, it's not super difficult, and each character has special moves. Special moves are key. I don't see how these things coming together to create a vehicle of fun and violence can be considered anything but art.

So are computer programmers now artists? Hell no. They're just nerds who make too much money.

A final note to whoever stole a Playstation last weekend that had Tekken 3 inside of it. I miss my Playstation very much. My friends and I now have nothing to amuse ourselves with and if the situation isn't remedied soon, we may have to get lives. If you, the reader, have seen my Playstation, or have it in your possession, bring it back to me. There will be absolutely no questions asked, and an up-front reward. Just drop it off at the Daily's office, Shatner B-03. If you are the thief reading this right now, as you walk down the street on the way to your underhanded little Playstation pawn shop, I sincerely hope this copy of The McGill Daily inhibits your vision enough that you only see the oncoming bus barreling towards you in time to realize that you are at fault because you've walked out into the middle of traffic, so there will be no lawsuits or damages after and you'll suddenly think to yourself, "Wow, karma is a powerful thing and damn, I never should've stolen that guys' Playstation." In short: I hope you get hit by a bus.

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Women on Top?

A recent production in Players' Theater tackles the role of the strong woman

BY JORDANA COMMISSO

Upon entering Montreal's last remaining blackbox theater, I constantly find myself becoming anxious. The McGill Players' Theatre has a way of causing one to think too much prior to entering.

It is always a battle to find the proper seat - if there are any left at all - in an effort to avoid being the person who must sit staring at the backs of the actors for the duration of the performance. This was not the case, however, on my most recent visit. I went to see Caryl Churchill's *Top Girls*, directed by Mike Pagnotta, which at present occupies the theater space.

Caryl Churchill is among one of America's top female playwrights. Her works, which often have a feminist spin, are extremely well written. With specific regards to *Top Girls*, Churchill's wit, directness and complexity, come together to form an emotionally draining, intellectually challenging piece.

The play revolves around the life of female executive Marlene (Martha Girvin) and the women in her life. The play's characters, 17 in all, range from historical figures such as Lady Nijo (Elsa Perez), a 13th century courtesan, to Pope Joan (Sophie Johnson), a woman who, disguised as a man, is thought to have been Pope between

845 and 856, to Nell (Lora White), a 20th century "ball breaker."

The director's biggest concerns with the piece interestingly occurred prior to production. He struggled with the decision over choosing this play due to the fact that he was unsure if he, as a male, could approach it with the appropriate disposition. He feared the reactions he might receive from audiences in response to a male attempting to deal with and conceptualize issues and concepts that were of a very blatant feminist nature.

Nevertheless, Pagnotta decided that he would not only benefit from this type of directorial experience, but that perhaps he had something to offer the piece.

Pagnotta spent a great deal of time examining the play's notions of intra-sexual and inter-sexual oppression -- oppression that occurs within the same gender and oppression that occurs between genders. In an effort to highlight these concepts, Pagnotta has drawn a very distinct line between gender and femininity. At times, however, this line gets blurred as the audience loses sight of the issues being presented. This is due to overlapping dialogue, which results in what, at times, seems like an actor's battle to be heard.

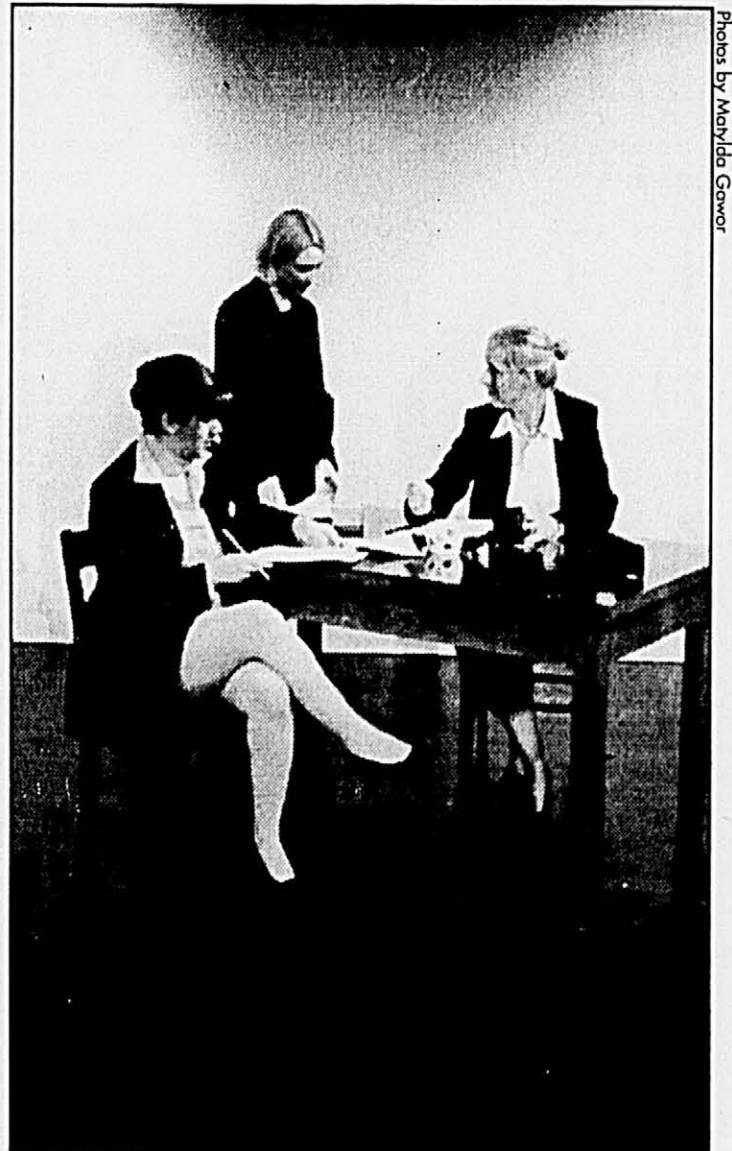
Churchill's writing style is a chal-

lenge to any director and I was pleasantly surprised that, aside from the opening scene of the play, Pagnotta seemed to meet that challenge.

From the moment the second scene begins, the tempo of the piece picks up with relatively effortless acting and fluid transitions. Each actor seemed to understand their character's objectives and were determined to achieve them. At certain points, the action seems static, but before long, Win (Elsa Perez) is there to add life to another mundane workday, or Joyce (Lora Whyte) is there to root us in reality. The costumes are beautiful and the set perfectly minimalist.

Pagnotta has tried to look at the sacrifices a woman must make in order not only to survive, but to make it to the top. The play asks what does it mean to be at the top? and what defines a woman - her femininity or merely her gender?

Overall, I was entertained by the production and even impressed with the way the actors handled the heavy and complicated script. I must also tip my hat to director Pagnotta for having the courage to go where no man has gone before. So, if you are in the mood to be entertained and to have your intellect exercised in the same sitting, I definitely recommend you go see *Top Girls*.



Photos by Mayhla Gower

Three of the seventeen *Top Girls*

Finding the Perfect Nose

A new McGill play, an old Russian story, and a Russian nose

BY JORDANA COMMISSO

Take an early 19th century short story, add some professional choreography, comic episodes, and modern technology, and what have you got? The McGill Mainstage production of *The Nose*, directed by Alexandre Marine.

The original story, written by Russian author Nikolai Gogol, is progressive for its time, and its absurd, illogical form would serve as a precursor to the works of authors such as Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

The story begins with a man, Kovalov, who wakes up one morning to find that his nose is missing - it has literally vanished from his face. The remainder of the story unfolds through Kovalov's search for his missing nose which, evidently, has taken on a life of its own, and has begun its ascent of societies hierarchical ladder. Kovalov, as a result, is left feeling stripped of his singularity and status, and is determined to reclaim his identity by tracking down his nose.

The McGill production of *The Nose* is an adaptation of the Russian classic, with a twist. The Bakers' Dozen ensemble have worked in collaboration with Marine to create a script that would maintain the premise and development

of the original story, and would move beyond it to extend past audience expectations. Through a series of improvisations and dramatic exercises, the ensemble itself created the dialogue that has enriched the individuality of Gogol's original characters, and has allowed for

strong movement-base to the piece, which added not only to the powerful acting, but has also contributed to the absurdity of the play. That the ensemble benefited from their weeks of intense movement training is evident throughout the performance, particularly in the scene where

actor has their own part in recreating everyday life - somewhat reminiscent of a flawless machine. This scene then moves into a choreographed dance piece revolving around noses. The striking, unique choreography occurs again later in the play where the actors actually build a nose with their bodies.

Film sequences and detailed comic episodes heighten the action of the play. A massive screen hangs from upstage and functions at times as a mirror, and at other times film footage appears on the screen to comment on the action of the play and displays a series of memory sequences.

The scenes range from an elaborate sequence in which Kovalov (Philip Graeme) recalls a steamy love scene between himself and a prominent Russian actress (Taliesin McEnaney), to scenes that are suggestive of horror films like *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*. In the latter sequence, the audience is presented with the on-screen image of an insane barber (Michael Wheeler) mutilating Kovalov's face.

Much of the play is expressionistic, using brilliant character roles to com-

ment on issues such as social hierarchy. Marine has used characters like a newspaper clerk (Laura Levin) and an upper-class mother-daughter duo (Moiria Sauer and Lisa Bird, respectively) in detailed comic episodes that complement and elevate the main action of the play.

In addition to the play's absurd, expressionistic, elaborate style, a metatheatrical frame has been added to it. The play begins and ends as though it were a play within a play. It opens with the actors having just completed a production run of *Cyrano de Bergerac*. In sum, the play is replete with theatrical images and metaphors coursing through it.

Together with *The Bakers' Dozen*, Marine has once again managed to bring life to the McGill Mainstage. *The Nose* is definitely a production of epic proportion worth seeing. One word of advice: go see it with an open mind, and you will be able to appreciate it for what it is meant to be.

The Nose is playing November 17th to 20th and 24th to 27th. The shows begin at 8 pm. Admission is \$8 for students, \$12 for all others.



Has anyone seen my nose?

the creation of new ones

Professional choreographer Annick Brisindi worked with the ensemble throughout to incorporate a remarkably

we see the Nose (played by Declan Brady) take life. All the actors enact a bizarre and ritualistic street scene, in which each

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CD Reviews

RAMASUTRA -
THE EAST INFECTION
DJ RAM
(Tox)

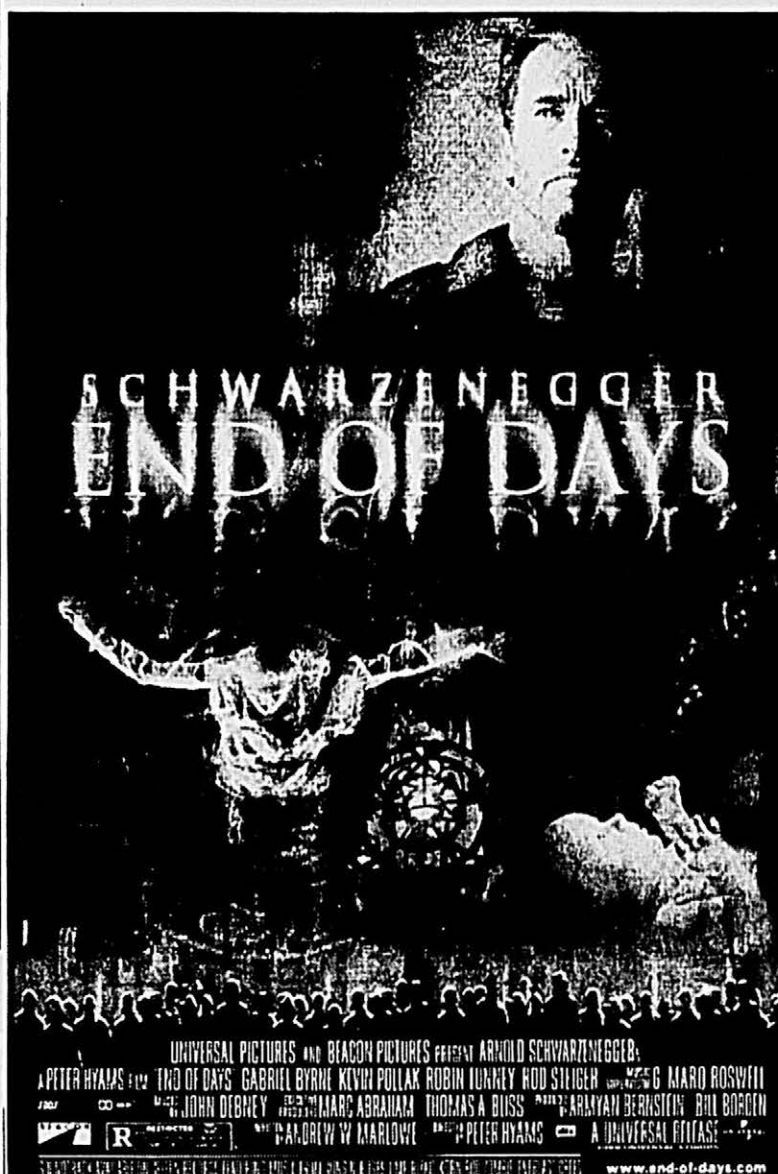
"Borrowing Without Stealing" may well have been Ramachandra Borcar's mantra when he was composing his debut album. Combining South Indian percussion with Shakunachi and Didjeridoo seamlessly, DJ Ram's worldly vision of what music should be is brilliantly brought together on this much anticipated album. Throughout *Ramasutra*, the influences of those he has collaborated with is evident. Amon Tobin-like cryptic mixes on "Jewel Of The Lotus" and the first release "Marder," which resembles early Chemical Brothers compositions.

Montreal-born and McGill-bred, DJ Ram recruited the intoxicating vocals of Mitsiko Miller and Dina Martire to anchor two of the album's best tracks. In addition, DJ Ram's first release was bolstered by the assistance of over 15 musicians, each contributing to this album's both swooning and sweeping sound.



Ramasutra is not DJ Ram's live performances captured on CD. While there is some drum n' bass to appease his fans, the overall concept behind *Ramasutra* reflects

Ram's melding of his many influences. Deeply organic at times, electronic at others, *Ramasutra* caters to those with a taste for cutting-edge music. -Gabe Flores



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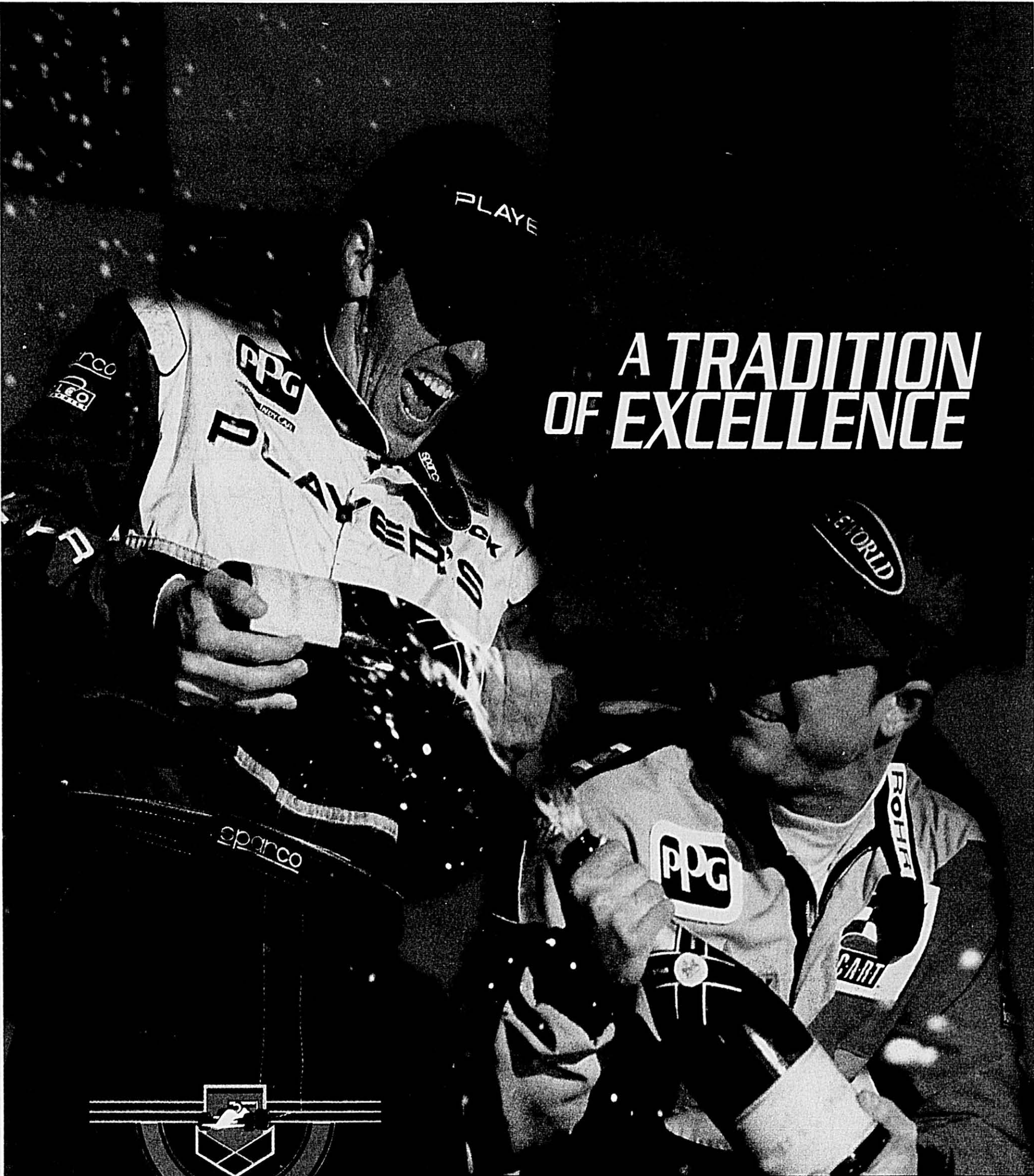
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